DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 067 708 CS 500 013

AUTHOR Greenbaum, Howard H.
TITLE The Appraisal of Organizational Communication Systems.
PUB DATE Apr 72
NOTE 44p.; Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the International Communication Assn. (Atlanta, Ga., April 19-22, 1972)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Responsibility; *Communication (Thought Transfer); Employer Employee Relationship; *Industrial Relations; Management Systems; *Models; Operations Research; *Organization; *Systems Approach; Systems Development

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to present a practical model for maintenance of organizational communication systems through the use of effective appraisal systems. The paper includes a detailed definition of organizational communication, an identification of the components of a communication appraisal system appropriate to such definition, a workplan for communication system appraisal, and a discussion of management's role in the area of communication system appraisal. (Author/LG)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED 067708

THE APPRAISAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

by

Howard H. Greenbaum, Ph.D.

Motor Parts Industries, Inc.

Melville, New York 11746

International Communication Association

Atlanta, Georgia

April 19 - 22, 1972

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Howard H. Greenbaum
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

CS 500 013

THE APPRAISAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

ABSTRACT

The thesis of this paper involves the following concepts: (1) the communication system is a fundamental factor in the attainment of high levels of organizational effectiveness; (2) the organization requires periodic appraisals of both the overall communication system and the activities constituting the parts of the system; and (3) communication and management researchers fulfill important social needs by developing the structure and processes required for practical communication system appraisals by qualified organization managers.

The presentation includes a detailed definition of organizational communication, an identification of the components of a communication appraisal system appropriate to such definition, a workplan for communication system appraisal, and a discussion of management's role in the area of communication system appraisals.

Coordinative-internal communication is the field of concentration. The proposed analysis calls for a review of the overall communication system, including the policies and controls relative thereto. In addition, for each significant communication activity, this approach requires criteria examination, standards establishment, and performance measurement, with due consideration being given to situational elements, including general organizational variables.

Emphasis is placed on the responsibilities of organization management for the maintenance of an effective communication system through an effective system of appraisal. The appraisal procedures suggested rely heavily on presently accepted propositions and methods in the fields of communication research and organization management.

One of the conclusions indicates that the proposed communication appraisal approach might be considered as a logical framework for an important segment of organizational communication research, for the reason that it appears capable of noting research needs, and assimilating research findings within a defined structure.

THE APPRAISAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Howard H. Greenbaum

The subject of organizational communication systems has long been credited with importance by leading writers in the fields of social-psychology, management theory, organization management, and communication theory.[1] However, it is only recently that empirical research efforts have been applied in the examination of communication systems and their effectiveness. A considerable number of field studies have tested propositions and hypotheses of communication theory. The more comprehensive of these studies include a description of the host organization, the nature of operations and communication processes, rationale for the study, hypotheses being tested, and detailed explanation of communication system examination methods and findings.[2] This kind of field research has presented some of the most advanced thinking in the area of communication system appraisals, and yet numerous problems have been recognized in this work and other work in the field.

A recent report on the state of organizational communication research includes the following problems as most immediately in need of correction: (1) short-period studies, (2) situationalism, (3) inadequate organization knowledge, (4) difficulties of manipulating variables in the laboratory, and (5) the need for more formulative research and more replication.[3] The viewpoint of this paper is that some of these

problems of organizational communication research could be diminished, if not eliminated, by working from within organizations on a continuous basis, as opposed to the single-time, guest-researcher basis. This kind of idea could become a reality if it promoted the interests of organization management. Proper motivation might provide longer period cooperation between practitioners and communication researchers, and would tend to establish part-time or full-time professional communication talent in appropriate staff functions of private organizations. The presence of personnel qualified to appraise communication systems would be a major contribution to the ever-present organizational goal of securing higher levels of effectiveness.

The approach herein attempts to combine progressive management techniques of planning and control, with the fundamentals of organizational communication theory so as to establish an effective communication system that is accepted as a normal managerial responsibility to maintain and improve. The thesis of this paper involves the following concepts: (1) the communication system is a fundamental factor in the attainment of high levels of organizational effectiveness; (2) the organization requires periodic appraisals of both the overall communication system and the activities constituting the parts of the system; and (3) communication and management researchers fulfill important social needs by developing the structure and processes required for practical communication system appraisals by qualified organization managers.

A complete examination of this theme requires an examination of the relationship of communication, coordination and effectiveness.[4] However, our basic concern will be with elements (2) and (3) of the thesis, ---the construction of an instrument for use in the examination of communication systems, and the utilization of such an instrument by qualified personnel, whether they be consultants, researchers or organization managers.

The presentation will proceed by defining organizational communication, identifying the components of a communication appraisal system, proposing a workplan for communication system appraisal, and commenting on the various management roles bearing responsibility for organizational communication maintenance and development.

I- THE NATURE OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Organizational communication is concerned with communication systems employed in organizations. For our purposes, organizations may be viewed as formal social units composed of motivated individuals, with personal and common objectives, involved in problem-generating activities that must be continuously coordinated; and this coordination is achieved, in large part, through the use of appropriate communication systems.

Organizational communication can be viewed as a field of study that is both narrower and broader than any of the other well-recognized divisions of general communication: --- i.e.,

inter-personal communication, small-group communication, mass communication and information systems. It is narrower for the reason that organizational communication is restricted to formal social units wherein individuals work toward common objectives; and it is broader in the sense that organizational communication is a cross-section of each of these disciplines inasmuch as organizations do experience person-to-person interaction, small-group meetings, programmed manual and machine procedures, and newspaper, radio, television, and national magazine advertising to large populations.

More specifically, organizational communication can be identified with a multitude of media and techniques that include bulletin boards, posters, payroll stuffers, company newspapers, radio and television advertising, attitude surveys; hardware like the telephone, intercom, public address, telex, and computer equipment; and employee activities including conferences, correspondence, report writing, supervisory communication, interviewing, public speaking, procedure and policy manual preparation, and suggestion systems.

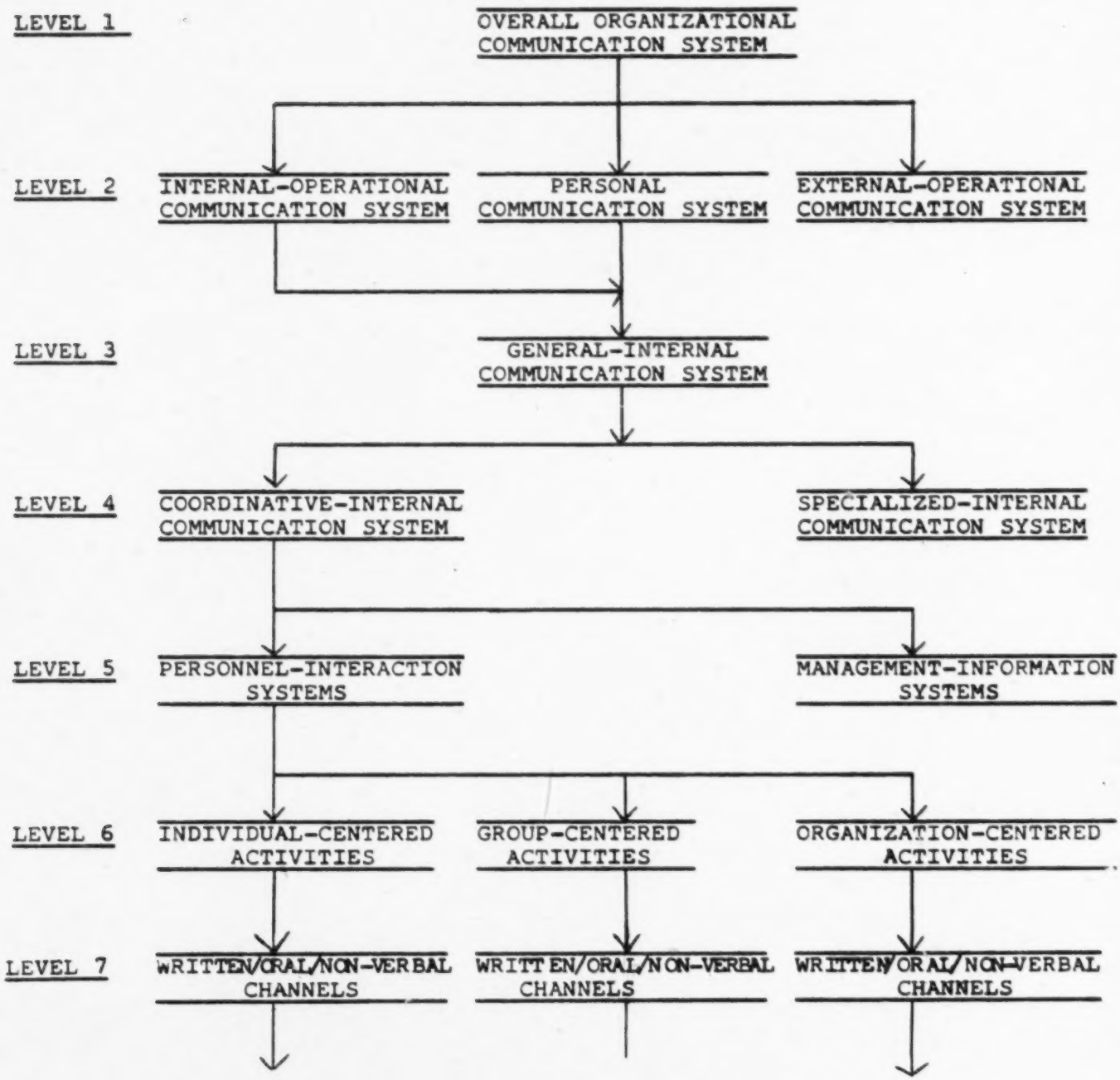
Internal vs. External Communication

Lesikar provides a definition of organizational communication by first noting that it consists of three sub-units termed internal-operational communication, external-operational communication, and personal communication. This is illustrated on levels 1 and 2 of Exhibit I. Internal-operational communication is the structured communication within the organization

EXHIBIT I

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

- DIAGRAM OF ALTERNATIVE CLASSIFICATIONS -



directly related to achieving workgoals; external-operational communication is the structured communication with outside people as suppliers, customers, and the public, also directly related to achieving the organization's workgoals; and personal communication is the incidental exchange of information and feeling which has an effect on the attitudes of the organization members, influences their willingness to do assigned tasks and is a significant factor relating to the achievement of organization goals.[5]

For the reason that our present interest in communication system analysis is related to the coordinative efficiency of organizational communication, we are more concerned with Lesikar's categories of internal-operational communication and personal communication and less concerned with external-operational communication. As indicated by Redding and Sanborn, there is good reason to separately treat the communication topics relating to internal organizational factors, excluding such forms of external communication as advertising, public relations and various sales media, which communication forms represent specialized areas with peculiar bodies of literature.[6] By excluding the area of external-operational communication from our present consideration of organizational communication, we are left with internal-operational communication and personal communication, which may be termed "general-internal communication" (Exhibit I - Level 3).

Coordinative vs. Specialized-Internal Communication

The general internal communication activities of an organization may be more closely examined by recognizing certain sub-systems. One such sub-system involves the distinction between the specialized communication practices of functional departments, and the general communication elements common to all units of the organization.

When one considers the communication activities of the individual departments directly or indirectly servicing customer or client requirements, it is obvious that highly technical languages and media are employed which somehow must be specially treated for purposes of communication system analysis. For example, in an industrial organization, the accounting, research, data processing, and engineering departments will collectively be utilizing the technical language and classifications of accounts, the jargon of programming and computers, the symbols of chemistry, physics and mathematics, and specially coded charts and plans efficient for purposes of construction and production. In the same manner, almost every department has its special vocabulary, paper forms, procedures and references. Herein, these technical communication forms are termed "specialized-internal communication", while the communication elements within an organization that are substantially common to all departments are termed "coordinative-internal communication", (Exhibit I - Level 4).

Management Information Systems vs. Personnel-Interaction Systems

Coordinative-internal communication may be divided into the sub-systems of management information systems and personnel-interaction systems. The concept of management information systems is defined herein as consisting of those communication methods which are amenable to substantial standardization, --- i.e., the programmed manual and machine procedures relative to the normal processing of customer, supplier, personnel and public agency requirements. The communication activities not so standardized are termed "personnel-interaction systems". This is the area of coordinative-internal communication that is less readily subject to high levels of standardization and more generally requires the exercise of special judgements and special communications due to the relatively non-recurrent nature of the problems considered.

Level 5 of Exhibit I illustrates the subdivision of the concept of coordinative-internal communication into the sub-systems of management information systems and personnel-interaction systems. Admittedly, the utilization of this definition does not result in a clear-cut division between the two concepts but it is believed to be sufficient for present purposes. It is most important to recognize that while management information systems is a major element in the coordinative-internal communication system, it is not considered in our present study of communication system appraisals. Considerable work has been accomplished by others in this area.[7] The emphasis here is on the personnel-interaction section of coordinative-internal communi-

cation. Accordingly, levels 6 and 7 of Exhibit I illustrate the further subdivision of that concept into the more familiar terminology of individual-centered, group-centered, and organization-centered activities.

Communication Activities in the Personnel-Interaction Sub-system

Exhibit II furnishes specific examples of the communication activities in the personnel-interaction subdivision of the coordinative-internal communication systems. The activities are classified into six categories based on a two-way matrix. Individual-centered activities, small-group-centered activities, and organization-centered activities are each subdivided as to their employment of written or oral channels of communication. A close examination of the activities noted in Exhibit II emphasizes the point that our present study of organizational communication systems is restricted to that part of the organizational communication system remaining after subtracting external-operational communication, specialized-internal communication, and management information systems, as defined above.

Communication Systems

To this point there has been no attempt to clarify the meaning of the term "communication system" as employed in the expression "communication system analysis" or "organizational communication systems". Inasmuch as our purpose is to explore the means by which we can appraise the communication system of an organization, it appears important to define the term "communication system".

EXHIBIT II

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES IN THE PERSONNEL-INTERACTION SUBDIVISION OF THE COORDINATIVE-INTERNAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

	WRITTEN MECHANISM	ORAL MECHANISM
INDIVIDUAL-CENTERED	Management reports; long-form; short-form Memoranda Notes and irregular requests Job descriptions and standards Workgoals and progress reviews Letters to new employees	Interviewing Orientation Appraisal Superior-subordinate job coordination Order giving Counseling Grievance processing Telecommunication Informal person-to-person conversation
SMALL GROUP-CENTERED	Meeting Agenda Minutes of meetings Visual aids Workgroup procedure handbook Workarea procedures	Management meetings at various levels including inter-departmental Workgroup meetings of supervisors with subordinates Informal lunch meetings involving several organization members
ORGANIZATION-CENTERED	Policy statements Union contract Management bulletins Supervisor's handbook House publication Bulleting boards Employee pamphlets and facts memo Surveys Suggestion box; Question box Company-wide regulations	Meetings of chief executive with all management personnel "The grapevine" Organization Annual Dinner

As used herein, "communication system" is a concept that may be applied to the entire field of organizational communication, or to any logical sub-division thereof. Thus, in Exhibit I above, the field of organizational communication was experimentally analyzed into a number of subdivisions or sub-systems. Each of these sub-systems can be treated as a communication system with peculiar structure and processes. Under this kind of approach, an organizational communication system is intended to mean those communication-related structural and processing elements in organizational social units appropriate for the selected area of communication study. In this particular study, we are basically concerned with that division of organizational communication shown on level 5 of Exhibit I and titled "Personnel-Interaction Systems". Accordingly, our objective is to present a conceptual structure and workplan for the appraisal of that particular area of organizational communication.

II- CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE FOR THE APPRAISAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

McDonough and Garrett indicate that a system is a means for accomplishing some purpose; and that a description of any system requires a statement as to expected accomplishments, and the specific mechanisms and procedures which are to be used in the process.[8] A review of writings in the area of organizational communication systems serves to substantiate this definition of "system". Writers with different ob-

jectives select more or less dissimilar conceptual structures to fulfill their purposes, yet all are concerned with organizational communication systems.[9] This is a most important point inasmuch as our subject also introduces a particular and distinctive objective; namely that of identifying the organization factors capable of furnishing a practical framework for a system of communication system evaluation. Such an objective results in still another conceptual structure involving a special group of communication-related elements.

Exhibit III indicates a two-way division of the conceptual structure for the appraisal of organizational communication systems; one section relating to the overall system, and the other section relating to specific activities that constitute the parts of the system. It is believed that there are many advantages in first considering the overall communication system and later studying the specific communication activities. One of the most important of these advantages is that such an approach provides a classified location both for workers who are interested in taking general communication and attitudinal temperatures of organizations, as well as those particularly interested in a special communication process within the organization. Further, the preliminary study of the surrounding organizational environment is a necessary prerequisite to a more complete understanding of the specific communication activity. Also, such an approach permits asking questions from two different viewpoints: On the one hand, "How well is the entire communication system working?", and "Does

EXHIBIT III

CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE FOR THE APPRAISAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

SECTION A: STRUCTURE RELATING TO THE OVERALL COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

1- Objectives, Plans, and Policies

2- Implementation Methods and Responsibilities

3- Measurement Methods

4- Organization Situational Factors

5- Supportive Communication Programs

SECTION B: STRUCTURE RELATING TO SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

1- Nature and Objectives

2- Performance Criteria and Procedural Instructions

3- Standards of Performance

4- Measurement Methods

5- Activity Situational Factors

6- Supportive Communication Programs

the communication system have the elements required to achieve objectives?"; and, on the other hand, "What is the efficiency and effectiveness of specific activities?", and "Which activities require support and what is the nature of that requirement?"

Structure Relating to the Overall Communication System

For our purposes, it is expedient to identify the conceptual structure for the appraisal of the overall communication system in terms of (1) objectives, plans and policies, (2) implementative methods and responsibilities, (3) measurement methods, (4) organization situational factors, and (5) supportive communication programs (Exhibit III, Section A).

The macro aspect of communication system appraisals requires that attention first be given to organization objectives and plans, so as to determine the explicit or implicit communication policies following therefrom. Communication policies are important for the reason that they represent management guidelines providing legitimacy for the utilization of specific communication activities intended to move the organization toward its goals.

Following the determination of objectives and communication policies, the problem is to determine whether the organization has provided the necessary implementative activities. This task can be approached by an inventory of communication activities, and an appropriate analysis. The analysis may include the classification of such activities by levels (individual, small-group, organization-wide) and by functions (informative, regulatory, persuasive, integrative); and

should continue with other tests to the point where a judgment is possible as to whether the communication activities within the organization are adequate, inadequate, or over-adequate to implement the communication policies. Such a judgment will not be necessary or even possible until steps have been taken to determine the attitudes and feelings of the organization members through measurement methods that include surveys, statistical indicators and regular operational feedback.

In the appraisal of the overall communication system, it is of great importance to examine the means by which the system is maintained and developed. Does anyone have a centralized staff responsibility for the communication function, and is there periodic accountability? Is the communication function treated in a formal manner by top management and does it have a place in the goals-plan of the organization? If no formal controls are explicitly related to the communication function, how does the organization process problems related to communication, and what procedures are followed for the introduction of innovative communication methods? Where is the responsibility for the overall communication system?

These questions related to the responsibility for the overall communication system, can be answered by an examination of the organization structure, background and leadership. The data derived from such an examination, together with general material on environmental influences related to leader-

ship behavior, constitutes a core of information that may be termed "organization situational factors". These factors, together with the knowledge obtained as to plans, policies, implementation methods, responsibilities, and attitudes, provide the basis for considering change proposals and supportive communication programs for the overall communication system.

Structure Relating to Specific Communication Activities

The micro aspect of communication system appraisals concentrates on the individual communication activity which may be studied in terms of (1) nature and objectives, (2) performance criteria and/ (3) standards of performance, (4) measurement methods, (5) activity situational factors, and (6) supportive communication programs (Exhibit III, Section B). procedural instructions

After arriving at an explicit statement of the nature and objectives of the activity, the particular communication process should be analyzed as to pertinent performance criteria, so as to develop practical procedural instructions for the conduct of that activity. The criteria to be considered include the elements of communication theory relating to content, media, channels, timing, interaction conditions, direction, participation, initiation, preparation, feedback, clarity, redundancy and other sub-classifications of communication behavior.

In addition to the establishment of instructions as to what is required to be done, it is also necessary to determine when such actions are satisfactorily performed. These standards of performance will be necessary in order to later

judge the quality of the specific communication activity, both as to its constituent parts, and in its entirety. In some cases these performance standards may be found to be explicit and mutually determined as in the case of a formal workplanning program, whereas in other cases the standards will perhaps be mostly implicit and unilateral.

The caliber of the actual performance of the communication activity may be determined through one or more of a group of measurement methods. These include evaluations secured from activity participants in the form of questionnaires, interviews and normal operational feedback; and independent evaluations including observation of interpersonal and small-group activities by outside parties.

By employing the data supplied through the measurement of actual performance, and comparing to standards, it is possible to highlight specific deviations deserving further study. These exceptional items should be investigated, so as to arrive at a conclusion as to the necessity for change or training or other supportive action for the specific communication activity. Before arriving at conclusions, however, it is necessary to consider the variables that are situational to the individual activity including communication skills, perceptive and conceptual abilities, and motivational influences, as well as the general organization situational factors arising from the formal structure and leadership policies.

III- WORKPLAN FOR A COMMUNICATION SYSTEM APPRAISAL

Exhibit IV employs the components discussed in the preceding section and presents a generalized workplan for a communication system appraisal. The major objective of this workplan is to furnish a more definite statement as to practical procedures for examination of communication systems and determination of effectiveness. As such, it is repetitive of many points covered under the introductory discussion of the conceptual structure for the appraisal of organizational communication systems. It is important to recognize that this kind of workplan is properly applicable only to organizational units with a degree of autonomy that permits considerable discretion in the determination of organizational and communication policies. This need not be an entire enterprise. Depending on the degree of centralization or decentralization, the workplan for a communication system appraisal can be applied to sub-units of legal entity organizations, whether or not geographically separated, and independent of size.

The workplan is intended to guide the communication manager (i.e., any manager bearing primary responsibility for organization-wide communication activities) to evaluate the communication system. Admittedly, this is an ambitious undertaking, but that is the challenge and the workplan in Exhibit IV ventures an answer; first, in terms of the overall communication system, and then in terms of specific communication activities.

EXHIBIT IV

WORKPLAN FOR A COMMUNICATION SYSTEM APPRAISAL

SECTION A: OVERALL COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Stage I: Fact-Finding

1- Determine organizational objectives, organizational policies, and communication policies.

2- Inventory the communication activities and classify in relation to specific communication policies.

3- Identify the nature of communication system controls, and the organization function vested with communication as a key responsibility.

Stage II: Analysis

1- Study the communication activities in terms of levels, objectives, functions, channels, and other class-types.

2- Utilize appropriate measurement methods to judge the strengths and weaknesses of the overall communication system.

3- Note the strengths and weaknesses of the overall system in relation to organization situational factors including structure, processes and leadership.

Stage III: Evaluation

1- Summarize the data obtained and arrive at conclusions concerning the adequacy of existing activities to implement policies.

2- Recommend necessary changes and/or supportive communication programs; and furnish details as to implementation.

EXHIBIT IV (CONTINUED)

WORKPLAN FOR A COMMUNICATION SYSTEM APPRAISAL

SECTION B: SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Stage I: Fact-Finding

1- Determine the nature and objectives of the activity.

2- Ascertain the procedural instructions for the activity with reference to applicable communication performance criteria.

3- Arrive at performance standards constituting satisfactory performance for each procedural instruction.

Stage II: Analysis

1- Employ appropriate measurement methods to estimate actual performance and deviation from standards.

2- Study deviations representing important weaknesses in the communication activity and give attention to the activity situational factors influencing communication behavior.

Stage III: Evaluation

1- Summarize the data obtained and arrive at conclusions concerning the adequacy of the specific communication activity to meet the objectives set for that activity.

2- Recommend corrective measures furnishing details as to implementation; and/or report on the presence of organization situational factors preventing accomplishment of objectives.

Workplan for Appraisal of the Overall Communication System (Exhibit IV, Section A)

Stage I (Fact-Finding) has the purpose of determining organizational objectives, organizational policies, communication policies, and communication activities being employed to implement such policies; as well as ascertaining the nature of communication system controls. A partial illustration of these search operations is provided by Exhibit V, "Internal Communication Activities Implementing Specific Communication Policies". Experience indicates that it may be easier to inventory communication activities than to determine organizational objectives and policies, for the reason that the latter elements are frequently not explicitly recorded. Even where written organizational objectives and policies do exist, it is still necessary to test their validity by determining whether they are in accord with the present mental attitudes of management.

Identification of communication system controls may result in a listing of responsibilities held by operating line and staff members of the organization. Where the communication function has been recognized, the staff responsibilities may be held by the personnel department or the public relations department. Where the communication function has not been recognized, the personnel area is the best place to start looking for managers with internal communication responsibilities. In all cases it is important to carefully note the nature and extent of such responsibilities, as well as the specific goals and objectives of the managers

EXHIBIT V

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTING SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION POLICIES

IT IS COMPANY POLICY TO:	ACTIVITIES
1. Provide effective internal communications channels, encouraging employees to express their views and recommendations, for the reason that candid, objective communication between all levels and groups is essential for individual development and organizational growth and success.	Workgroup meetings Interdepartmental meetings Supervisor/Subordinate scheduled meetings Exit interviews
2. Transmit to all employees present corporate policies, practices, and plans, or any planned changes thereof, so that there is every opportunity for employees to offer their suggestions and to revise their practices to conform to such changes.	Company-wide Publications Bulletin Boards Employee Pamphlets Quarterly staff meetings Workgroup meetings
3. Discuss with each new employee, both prior to hiring and during first three weeks of employment, the full range of employee policies and working conditions so that the new employee accepts the position with a full knowledge of company practices and reaches a productive level of performance in a minimum of time.	Hiring interview Company brochure Benefits brochure Orientation interview
4. Clearly define position responsibilities and performance criteria and advise and counsel each employee on his/her performance and career progress in order to maximize individual development and optimize job satisfaction.	Annual reviews Job descriptions/ standards/goals/ progress reviews
5. Continuously seek more efficient communications and information systems in order both to improve coordination of departmental operations and to provide necessary information for better decision-making capabilities at minimum cost.	Electronic Data Processing Procedures charts Interoffice reports Telephone Telex Public address systems

holding communication responsibilities.

Stage II (Analysis) has the purpose of studying the inventoried communication activities in respect to functions served within the overall system; and determining the strengths and weaknesses of the general system. A partial illustration of this kind of analysis is furnished by Exhibit VI, "Internal Communication Activities Classified by Communication Level and Objectives". This exhibit shows the division of approximately fifty communication activities into twelve classifications formed by the matrix of four communication objectives and three levels of communication. This starts to give an understanding of the functions served by the existing implementative methods utilized by an organization. For some organizations, there may be an excess of blank space in the boxes relative to informative and integrative communication objectives. For organizations employing communication activities that cover all areas, the questions may turn to quality, rather than variety. Obviously, other classifications and forms of communication activity analysis are possible and should be applied.

For the purpose of judging the general effectiveness of the communication system, investigators have usually employed questionnaire survey methods, interview survey methods, observation techniques and other methods directed to an overall consideration of the attitudes of employees toward communication practices and associated organizational variables. Illustrations of these tools may be found in detailed empirical

EXHIBIT VI

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

CLASSIFIED BY COMMUNICATION LEVEL AND OBJECTIVES

	LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION		
OBJECTIVES	INTER-PERSONAL	SMALL-GROUP	ORGANIZATION
INFORMATIVE	Hiring interview Exit interview Orientation Cross-functioning Oral and written reports	Workgroup meetings Executive committee meetings Supervisory training program Directors meeting	"House publication" Bulletin boards Employee pamphlets Benefits brochure Supervisory staff meetings Union contract Policy statements "The grapevine"
REGULATORY	Supervisor requests Supervisor/Subord. scheduled meetings Job descriptions and standards Annual review Special problem sessions	Executive committee meetings Crisis-type meeting: fire, flood, strike	Policy statements Standard procedures Regulations and changes therein Company facts memo Union Contract
PERSUASIVE	Oral and written reports and requests Problem resolution Expression of viewpoint as to plans, organization, goals, controls, etc.	Workgroup meetings Executive committee meetings Informal lunch conversation Special tell and sell meetings Budget deliberations	Employee pamphlets Supervisory staff meetings
INTEGRATIVE	Workplanning program Annual reviews Cross-functioning Informal lunch involving two organization members.	Workgroup meetings Executive committee meetings Interdepartmental meetings Coffee-break discussions Informal lunch involving more than two organization members	"House publication" Supervisory staff meetings D-P and Charting Newsletter Holiday social function "The grapevine"

studies of organizational communication.[10]

In all instances, it is important to supplement the general organizational knowledge accumulated in the fact-finding phase by giving attention to the organization history, structure, management processes and leadership so as to gain the broadest understanding of what is termed herein "organization situational factors".

Stage III (Evaluation) has the purpose of summarizing the findings and the analysis of the previous stages and concluding as to the adequacy of the existing activities in the implementation of policies. From the viewpoint of specific communication policies, the findings may indicate that certain activities are lacking; or that existing activities are not sufficiently comprehensive, or tend to overlook certain desirable objectives while overstressing other matters; or that the activities are present but the results are not being obtained, etc.

Beyond the statement of findings, there is the necessity for setting forth recommendations. Such recommendations may be triggered by the discovery of certain weaknesses in the system, but they must be molded in light of organization objectives, policies and situational factors.

Workplan for Appraisal of a Specific Communication Activity (Exhibit IV, Section B)

Stage I (Fact-Finding) has the purpose of determining the nature and objectives of the activity, relevant performance criteria, procedural instructions for the conduct of the activ-

ity, and performance standards. As stated in the discussion of conceptual structure, the particular activity should be analyzed in terms of the communication elements, including content, media, timing, interaction conditions, direction, participation, initiation, preparation, feedback, redundancy, linking, controls, etc. This consideration of performance criteria will aid in the determination of procedural instructions, followed by deductions as to performance standards applicable in the circumstances. A limited illustration of this kind of fact-finding is provided by Exhibit VII, "Performance Criteria, Procedural Instructions and Performance Standards For The Internal Communication Activity of Employee Orientation". In that exhibit four procedural instructions have been developed from a checklist of possible performance criteria, with the aid of an experienced manager in this area of responsibility. Eight performance criteria were considered to be most important during the give-and-take consideration of the procedures presently employed by the organization. In this manner it was possible to formulate a written procedure and performance standards for a communication activity that had hitherto been utilized without detailed instructions or standards. In some organizations, with extensive systems support, facts concerning communication activities will be more readily available. However, despite the existence of explicit statements in the procedure manual, it is important to determine if management's current thinking is still in accord with such statements; and it is essen-

EXHIBIT VII

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA, PROCEDURAL INSTRUCTIONS AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR THE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY OF EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

AREA OF PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	PROCEDURAL INSTRUCTION	PERFORMANCE STANDARD
Content Direction Timing	Provide for the general orientation of new employees, within the department and relative to the entire organization.	Within 5 working days of hiring
Feedback Content Timing	Encourage new employee to indicate problems promptly so difficulties may be overcome quickly.	Formal once a week brief interview for min. of first 3 weeks
Initiation Content Controls Timing	Arrange for self or senior skilled personnel to train new employee in job details. Employ procedure charts as a guide and reference.	Orient in 2 weeks Train in 60 days
Initiation Participation Interaction conditions Timing	Introduce employee to individual members of group and do everything possible to insure that new member will be accepted by group on a social basis. Utilize methods appropriate to position.	Immediately on date of start

tial to identify the performance standards relating to the communication activity.

Stage II (Analysis) has the purpose of studying the particular communication activity in order to determine if performance is up to standard. This may be done through the employment of an appropriate measurement method, ---e.g., questionnaires, interviews, supervisory reports, observation, informal operational feedback, workplanning progress reports, and other methods. Once there is an indication of the extent of achievement, there is a need to isolate the situations representing serious deviations from previously established standards, and to study the situational factors that influence communication behavior in that particular activity.

Stage III (Evaluation) has the purpose of summarizing the findings and analysis relative to the specific communication activity and concluding as to the adequacy of the present performance to meet the objectives and the performance standards previously set for that activity. If a serious weakness exists in the activity, and the activity is to be retained, the evaluation might include a recommendation for supportive communication programs. However, it is important to recognize that all communication problems are not communication-centered, in the sense that the cause of the difficulty or weakness may arise from activity situational factors that include organizational policies, leadership and structure, or other basic processes of organizational operation. In such instances, the data collected in the appraisal of the overall communication system will pro-

vide important information to apply in arriving at conclusions concerning a particular communication activity.

IV- MANAGEMENT'S ROLE IN COMMUNICATION SYSTEM APPRAISAL[11]

The foregoing appraisal plan could be utilized by a qualified person engaged in a one-time review of an organization. However, the ideas and procedures have been formulated for the primary purpose of supporting the view that continuous and on-going communication control elements should be integrated into the formal organizational processes. A continuous program of appraisal provides communication control and is concerned with both the maintenance and the development of the communication system. Variables making for change in the fields of marketing, production, and finance are also dynamic factors making for change in organizational communication; and management has an important and continuous role to play in operating and controlling the communication system.

The effective operation of an on-going appraisal program requires personnel with high levels of ability. Although the step-by-step presentation in previous sections resembles simple instructions for the assembly of a mechanical product, it should be realized that the appraisal process is complex and the procedures involve much more art than mechanics or science. The responsibility for achieving effective communication systems rests with three areas of the management structure: (1) the top management team concerned with organization policies and the implementation of strategic plans; (2) the internal-communica-

tion manager concerned with communication policies and activities; and (3) the general corps of staff and operating managers concerned with the efficient execution of the basic organization and management functions, including the function of communication.

The Responsibilities of Upper-Level (Top) Management

For purposes of this discussion, it will be assumed that we are concerned with an organization operating under a leadership that is closer to McGregor's Theory Y than to Theory X, and closer to Likert's Systems 3 or 4 than to Systems 1 or 2, --- i.e., the organizational policies are consultative and participative rather than authoritative, and there is a concordance of both policy and spirit, on the part of top management, to do everything possible to improve the communication process and to maintain an effective system of communication. Under these circumstances it is recommended that the top management of the organization carry out their responsibilities by taking the following actions:[12]

(1) Appoint an internal-communication manager, or clearly designate another manager (e.g., the personnel administrator) to be responsible for the implementation of communication policies.

(2) Issue a formal policy on communication.

(3) Provide an explicit statement of organization objectives and policies.

(4) Announce that the communication program has the full support and participation of the chief executive.

(5) Identify communication effectiveness as an important variable to be considered in annual performance reviews of individual managers.

(6) Clarify the job responsibilities of the internal-communication manager from that of closely-related

organizational functions as public relations, general information systems, computer information systems, training, personnel, organizational development, etc.

(7) Provide staff authority to the internal-communication manager equivalent to vice-presidents reporting to the executive vice-president or chief executive officer.

(8) Confer with the internal-communication manager in matters relating to the communication aspects of strategy implementation, and change programs.

(9) Study recommendations of the internal-communication manager relative to communication activities intended to implement the plans of the organization.

(10) Adopt the concept of an annual communication system appraisal, with long-form report, as a major element of an annual organizational review.

The Responsibilities of the Internal-Communication Manager

The workplan for the appraisal of communication systems is an audit program requiring a professional in the fields of communication and management. The person fulfilling this function has been identified herein by the title of "internal-communication manager". Actually, this person might be found in the position of personnel administrator, personnel manager, or manager of organization development. The job responsibilities of a specialist in this position could include key areas relating to (1) the maintenance of professional competence, (2) cooperation with other communication-centered departments, (public relations, information systems, training), (3) organization development, (4) internal-communication controls, (5) communication technology, (6) communication improvement programs, and (7) communication system appraisal. Here we are concerned with the key responsibility area of communication

system appraisal.

In respect to the overall communication system, the internal-communication manager will maintain such schedules, charts, and working papers that reflect an integrated and organized review of the entire communication system; and furnish the data to be submitted to top management in a periodic written report as to facts, problems, basic issues, alternatives, analyses and recommendations. For example, analysis may disclose that there is a scarcity of integrative activities on the small-group level or an absence of informative activities on the organization level; and that this represents an area of weakness where communication activities fail to fulfill the objectives of certain communication policies. Accordingly, the communication manager should submit recommendations that will improve the situation.

In respect to specific communication activities, where the analysis of a given activity discloses material variations from standards, it is necessary to locate the behavioral basis for such deviations and to recommend corrective measures. It is the job of the internal-communication manager, working with functional managers, to conduct an investigation that includes data collection, analysis, and evaluation.

Such a manager of communication activities should possess the following qualifications: (1) formal training in communication sciences, organizational management, personnel administration, information-systems, and the social-psychology of organization management; (2) practical experience in organization management; (3) a personality able to cope with long-range planning

and slow implementation; and (4) a conviction as to the important role that communication can play in achieving high levels of organizational effectiveness. A qualified person of this type, with the full support of the top-management group, as described above, can be vested with the responsibility for maintaining the health of the organizational communication system.

The Responsibilities of General Management Personnel

The efficient execution of coordinative-internal communication activities can be viewed as the responsibility of general management personnel, working with the staff assistance of the internal-communication manager, operating under the policies and objectives set forth by top management. From this point of view, communication planning is little different from other organizational plans insofar as they are carried out through activities; and these activities are the responsibilities of general management personnel to organize, direct and control so as to achieve organization objectives. Therefore, the sanction and reward system of organizations is just as applicable to communication objectives as to the objectives of other line and staff functions as marketing, production, and personnel.[13]

If supervisors at various management levels are to be held responsible for segments of organizational communication, it is helpful to visualize the control system as being an organization-wide workplanning program. Such a program involves the achievement of annual supervisor-subordinate agreements as to the entire field of technical and managerial responsibilities. This

includes specific communication responsibilities and standards relative thereto, and periodic reviews of progress toward mutually agreed-upon goals. Within such a framework of job responsibilities and goals, the communication responsibilities of management personnel are detailed in the form of individual communication activity analyses relevant to the work areas of the particular superior-subordinate combination.

The establishment of individual communication activity analyses involves a joint effort on the part of operating line managers and the internal-communication manager. The process requires the application of communication theory and experience to local situational circumstances. In order to develop procedural instructions and standards for a given communication activity, it is necessary that the participating managers have a good understanding of organizational policies, communication policies and the relative importance of specified performance criteria. Once the standards have been established, subsequent supervisor-subordinate reviews will disclose conformance or deviation from such standards, and this information will be made available to the internal-communication manager for use in later staff-line reviews of particular communication activities. Under this kind of program, the general management personnel are fully involved in the administration of the organizational communication system, --- planning, organizing, and controlling, while the staff function of internal-communication manager furnishes necessary support and guidance.

V- SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The presentation above suggests a possible approach to the problem of appraising the communication system of an organization. For the reason that the communication system is generally considered to be a fundamental factor in the attainment of high levels of organizational effectiveness, it follows that organizations should employ efficient methods of communication system appraisal that will work in the direction of maintaining and improving the communication system. Therefore, we have been concerned with the examination of organizational communication systems, and the responsibilities of management in this particular area.

One of the first questions that confronts the investigator of communication systems is that of system identification. What is meant by the term "organizational communication systems"? Accordingly, the preceding noted how organizational communication differs from other forms of communication; and that this particular discussion excluded consideration of several forms of organizational communication, --- viz., external-operational communication, specialized-internal communication, and the management information system aspect of coordinative internal-communication. The actual area studied was identified as the personnel-interaction subdivision of the coordinative internal-communication system.

This study excluded the consideration of management information systems solely on the basis of practicalities. It was not possible to attempt a review of both the personnel-

interaction and the management-information subsystems of coordinative internal-communication. However, it is important to emphasize that a communication system appraisal should be concerned with both of these areas if it is to arrive at causal factors and not stop at the level of symptom-descriptions. The underlying systems of paper-flow and task performance are very closely related to the problems arising in the personnel-interaction area of interpersonal, small-group, and other organizational communication activities. Ideally, responsibility for communication in both these areas should be within the same organizational sub-unit, or at least be subject to coordination by a manager below the level of the chief executive.

After defining the particular area of organizational communication to be reviewed, there was presented a conceptual structure for the appraisal of the communication system so-defined. This structure included a major distinction between the examination of the overall communication system and the analysis of specific communication activities; and was concerned with organization policies, communication policies, communication activities, performance criteria, standards, measurement methods, situational factors and supportive programs.

Next, there was presented a formal workplan for the appraisal of communication systems. The appraisal workplan fulfills the function of recommending specific procedures and classifying these procedures into the problem-solving categories of fact-finding, analysis, and evaluation. A review of these procedural

steps indicates the high level of interdependence between the disciplines of communication and management. The empirical study of communication requires the complete organization knowledge found in management theory and practice; and a sound managerial review requires a knowledge of communication theory and the empirical methods developed by communication researchers.

Finally, it was indicated how three basic areas of the management structure share the responsibilities for maintaining and developing the communication system: (1) top management, (2) the internal-communication manager, and (3) the general line and staff managers. A distinction was drawn between the one-time, short-period communication survey and the recurrent appraisal review over a long-period of time; and it was noted that the continuous and on-going program has definite advantages and it is available to managements interested in maintaining effective communication systems.

The foregoing indicates that the internal communication system of an organization can be identified and analyzed for the purpose of improving coordination and effectiveness. While it is obvious that the current state of the art requires development, enough is known at this stage so that practitioners can be aided by theory. Many areas of the subject call for considerable additional investigation. For example, (1) the suggested steps in the appraisal program require critical evaluation and reconstruction; (2) different systems of management need study so as to generalize as to their effect on the overall communication system and upon specific communication activities;

(3) existing materials on the subject of communication performance criteria should be organized in accordance with standard classifications, perhaps to constitute a taxonomy, if that is applicable; (4) clarification is needed on the problem of the size of the organizational unit that is best suited to appraisals; and (5) general procedural instructions or guides are required for each of the major communication activities with allowances provided for the particular management system or system of leadership policies.

A special word is necessary in reference to the concept of utilizing general procedural instructions for specific communication activities. These procedural guides might consist of expert commentaries relative to the performance criteria considered to be of maximum importance to the particular activity, the basis for establishing instructions and standards relative thereto, and the means of measuring performance and interpreting deviations from standards. This kind of material would provide guidance to the organization communication manager in the selection of goals for that particular communication activity under the local conditions --- i.e., the situational factors. By providing improved measurement methods and organizing research findings for the organization communication manager, the social scientist can make a significant contribution toward the development of more effective organizations. With improved tools, the internal-communication manager may be able to calmly handle the ever-present situational elements after due consideration has been given to the generally accepted theoretical pre-

cepts that are so numerous and seemingly so unmanageable.

Assuming that communication goals have the full support of top management, the length of time required to develop a recognizable vehicle of communication system analysis appears to be a function of the level of general organization, specially in respect to matters involving policies, procedures, job descriptions, goals, standards and performance progress reviews. In the advanced organization, with high-powered personnel and organization development programs, the concept of managerial responsibility for communication and performance appraisals thereon may be a very natural small step forward. However, in many other cases, there will be no designated communication manager, and the communication-conscious personnel manager or organization development manager will need a sound proposal and proper authorization in order to establish the basic programs that will ultimately lead to a form of communication system appraisal that goes beyond the level of occasional communication reviews and attitude surveys.

It is suggested that the communication appraisal approach, as noted herein or as amended, be considered as one of the possible frameworks furnishing direction for an important segment of organizational communication research. Conceivably, such a structure could provide a basic method for obtaining an organized and cumulative collection of case study data relative to organizational communication. This approach appears capable of noting many research needs, and assimilating research findings within a defined structure. With the participation of many in-

dependent organizations, of all types, and adequate coordination by a central research bureau attached to a professional organization or a university, it appears possible to start long-period empirical studies, and to evolve a theory that will satisfactorily take account of the situational factors. Over a number of years the continuation of such studies in the same organizations would develop experience and skills and have the effect of supplying expert knowledge of the particular organization. With an increase in the number of organizations participating on a continuous basis, the present need for additional replication might be lessened. A program of this type could be fashioned so as to benefit both the participating organization and the discipline of organizational communication. The unifying theme would be appraisals of communication systems. It may be that the subject has sufficient interest and importance to obtain the support and active participation of ~~independent~~ organizations.

REFERENCES

1- See C.Barnard, The Function of the Executive(Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press 1938); F.J.Roethlisberger & W.J.Dickson, Management and the Worker(New York,J.Wiley &Sons, Inc.Science Editions,1964; copyright 1939 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College); A.Bavelas and D.Barrett, "An Experimental Approach to Organizational Communication,"Personnel,March 1951, 27: 366-371; J.Dorsey,Jr., "A Communication Model for Administration", Administrative Science Quarterly,1957, 2:307-324; H.Simon, Administrative Behavior(New York: The Free Press, 1957); C.Redfield, Communication in Management(Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1958); L.Thayer, Administrative Communication(Homewood,Illinois,R.D.Irwin Inc. 1961); H.Guetzkow, "Communications in Organizations" in J.March(Ed.) Handbook of Organizations,(Chicago: Rand McNally & Co. 1965); and D.Katz and R.Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations(New York J.Wiley &Sons, Inc. 1966)

2- For a comprehensive historical review of empirical research in organizational communication, see W.C.Redding, "The Empirical Study of Human Communication in Business and Industry," Frontiers in Experimental Speech Communication Research,Paul E. Ried (Ed.) (Syracuse, N.Y., Syracuse University Press, 1966)pp.47-81. Several studies noted therein are comprehensive enough to be termed "appraisals of organizational communication systems." Dr. Redding dates the start of empirical work with Roethlisberger and Dickson's, Management and the Worker (1939), followed by the psychologically-based studies of Katz, Maccobby, Gurin and Floor in 1948-1950. Thereafter, in the 1950's and 1960's, many doctoral dissertations, and a few other publications, supplied a constant flow of reports on studies of communication in industrial organizations. By the year 1965, Redding estimates that there were approximately 100 empirical studies explicitly concerned with industrial communication and executed in a real-life organizational setting with some use of controlled observation or quantification. Apparently, most of these had been executed in the fifteen year period 1950-1965.

3- D.F.Schwartz, C.E.Larson, and D.F.Faules, "Research Priorities in Organizational Communication," a committee report submitted May 1970 at the 18th Annual conference of the International Communication Association, Minneapolis, Minnesotta.

4- See J.L.Price, Organizational Effectiveness(Homewood,Illinois, R.D.Irwin, Inc. 1968); S.Seashore, "Criteria of Organizational Effectiveness", Michigan Business Review July 1965,pp.26-30; T.Mahoney and W. Weitzel, "Managerial Models of Organizational Effectiveness," Administrative Science Quarterly,September 1969, pp.357-365; R.Likert, The Human Organization(New York,McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967); L.Thayer, Communication and Communication Systems (New York, R.D.Irwin,Inc. 1968)

5- R.Lesikar, Business Communication: Theory and Application (Homewood, Illinois: R.D.IrwinInc.1968) pp.9-10

6- W.Redding and G.Sanborn, Business and Industrial Communication (New York: Harper & Row,1964) p.30

7- A.McDonough and L.Garrett, Management Systems:Working Concepts and Practices(Homewood, Illinois: R.D.Irwin,Inc. 1965); T.Prince, Information Systems for Management Planning and Control (Homewood,Illinois: R.D.Irwin,Inc. 1966); G.Vardaman and C.Halterman, Managerial Control Through Communication(New York: J.Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1968)

8- A.McDonough and L. Garrett, op.cit., p.2

9- For a brief review of communication system concepts in the literature of communication theory and management theory, see H.H.Greenbaum, "Organization Communication Systems: Identification and Appraisal", an unpublished manuscript presented at the 19th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, April 22-24,1971, Phoenix, Arizona, pp.9-13.

10-See doctoral dissertations in the field of organizational communication under the auspices of departments of speech, communication, education, sociology and business administration. For example, G.A.Sanborn, An Analytical Study of Oral Communication Practices in a Nationwide Retail Sales Organization(Purdue University Ph.D., 1961, unpublished); D.A.Level, A Case Study of Internal and External Communication Practices in an Urban Bank(Purdue University Ph.D., 1959, unpublished); H.W.Simons, A Comparison of Communication Attributes and Rated Job Performance of Supervisors in a Large Commercial Enterprise(Purdue University Ph.D.1961, unpublished); T.R.Nilsen, The Communication Survey, A Study of Communication Problems in Three Office and Factory Units(Northwestern University Ph.D.1953, unpublished); W.H.Cole, The Characteristics of Written Communications and Attitudes Toward Communication in a Selected Corporation with Implications for Improvement in Business Writing Instruction(Oklahoma State University Ed.D., 1969, unpublished).

11-The contents of this section have been drawn from H.H.Greenbaum, "Management's Role in Organizational Communication Analysis", a paper presented to the 36th Annual Convention of the American Business Communication Association, December 29,1971,Kansas City, Missouri.

12-Several of the ideas in this sub-section have been previously expressed by representatives of organization management. See W.Merrihue, Managing by Communication(New York, McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc. 1960); and L.Townsend, "A Corporate President's View of the Internal Communication Function", Journal of Communication, December 1965, pp.208-215.

13-For a somewhat similar view, see L.Spataro, "Management of Communication", Journal of Business Communication, Summer 1969, pp.6-9.